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DEPT FOR AF/W, AF/RSA, INR/AA AND DRL/PHD  
PARIS FOR POL - D'ELIA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/20/2011

TAGS: PHUM PGOV SG

SUBJECT: POLITICAL LEADERS HARASSED BY POLICE

REF: A. DAKAR 0565

¶B. DAKAR 0837

Classified By: DCM Robert P. Jackson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

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¶1. (SBU) The police's Criminal Investigation Department (DIC) in recent weeks has called in several opposition and labor leaders for interrogation. Senegal being ten months away from legislative and presidential elections, the increasingly organized opposition has stepped up attacks against President Wade, especially on issues of good governance. Wade and his ruling Democratic Party of Senegal (PDS) have reckoned that urban impoverished masses concentrated in Dakar and its suburbs and in a few regional cities will significantly influence the outcome of elections. The fight to influence the opinion of these urban voters has been fierce and the GOS has not hesitated to solicit the DIC to intimidate opponents through lengthy interrogations and detentions. END SUMMARY.

POLITICAL LEADERS CHALLENGE THE POLICE

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¶2. (SBU) On April 8, Amath Dansokho, MP and leader of the small Party of Labor and Independence (PIT), the inspiration behind Wade's winning coalition in 2000 and the organizer of the current opposition to Wade, announced he would not obey an order to appear before the DIC. He argued that the DIC had questioned him for seven hours two days earlier and he had nothing to add regarding comments he made on an alleged illegal transfer of CFA 440 billion (approximately USD 800 million) by Wade's regime (Ref B). Dansokho received the support of all major opposition leaders, and civil society members who formed a human shield at his apartment in Dakar to prevent his arrest. The GOS cancelled the police order to avoid confrontation, but, two days later, the prosecutor took the case in hand and served Dansokho a court order to appear at the court on April 18, a deadline which has been postponed at the request of Dansokho's attorneys.

POLICE ACCUSED OF DESECRATING THE CATHEDRAL

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¶3. (SBU) Echoing Dansokho's refusal to report to the DIC, Jean Paul Dias, who helped Wade build the PDS until their estrangement in the mid-1990's, invited all political leaders to boycott orders from the DIC. Dias was immediately summoned on April 14, but he decided to attend mass on Good Friday rather than report to the police. Plain-clothes officers followed him into Dakar's Cathedral, an intrusion firmly condemned by the Catholic Archbishop and prominent leaders of the Christian community. They were particularly upset that the police had entered the Cathedral on Good Friday. The GOS denied any police presence in the church and accused the opposition of manipulating the power of religious

symbols in an irresponsible way. Dias was allowed to go home before being called again at the DIC. He was interrogated for ten hours and put under administrative detention. A day later, Diaz' son, whom Diaz has told us he placed in the Socialist Party "in order to cover all political bets," called the President a "provocateur," and charged that the DIC has become "a political police."

COMMENT

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¶4. (C) In 2005, with the arrest of ex-Prime Minister Idrissa Seck, Wade admitted that his government had mismanaged public funds. Despite this admission, many Senegalese are disappointed by the opacity of Wade's financial management. Lack of transparency and widespread suspicion of official corruption promise to figure prominently in the political debate, but many close to Wade appear resistant to reform. Any further use of the police to interrogate Wade's opponents, especially if followed by selective prosecutions, could further weaken already widely-in-disrepute legal and judicial institutions, and intensify fears that the rule of law could be jeopardized for political ends. END COMMENT.

JACOBS